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The United Nations First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 7-11 July 2003

Letter dated 9 July 2003 from the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations and has the honour to forward, attached herewith, the National Report of the Hellenic Republic to the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

03-42942 (E)

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

D1 Directorate

NATIONAL REPORT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC TO THE FIRST BIENNIAL MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO PREVENT, COMBAT AND ERADICATE THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN ALL ITS ASPECTS

(New York, 7-11 July 2003)

Greece, being concerned by the excessive accumulation and the illicit trafficking in SALW, actively participates in all international and regional efforts to combat the proliferation of SALW. It has also addressed the issue by taking appropriate national action and measures.

NATIONAL LEVEL

1. National coordination agency

The Ministry of Public Order (Headquarters of the Hellenic Police / Department for National Security / Section for Arms and Explosives) constitutes the national coordination body for all activities related to combating the illicit trade in SALW. Within the Section for Arms and Explosives a special bureau for the exchange of information on all transactions of SALW has been set up. An elaborate electronic database facilitates the sharing of information on SALW with other competent authorities in Greece, regional organizations (INTERPOL, EUROPOL, EU etc.) and other countries.

2. National point of contact

The national point of contact with other states on issues concerning the implementation of the UN Programme of Action against the illicit trafficking in SALW is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (D1 Directorate of United Nations and International Organizations and Conferences).

3. Legislation, regulations, administrative procedures

The production, export, import and transit of SALW are regulated by Law 2168/93 "Issues related to arms, ammunition and explosives", as revised by Laws 2334/95 and 2452/96.

The transport control on SALW transfers is exercised by the Customs Service according to the provisions of the customs legislation. Customs officials work in close cooperation with their counterparts of the Border and Port Police

National laws, regulations and procedures concerning the prevention, combating and eradication of the illicit trade in SALW are made public through their publication in the Official Gazette

4. Law enforcement (criminalization)

National legislation provides that violations of the rules governing SALW transactions are punishable by fines and/or imprisonment from 1 to 5 years.

According to Law No 92/1967, UN Security Council embargo resolutions are embodied in the national legislation and implemented accordingly by Presidential Decrees

The above mentioned law makes the violation of any United Nations Security Council arms embargo a misdemeanor, punished by imprisonment for up to five years. It also imposes the confiscation of any military item imported, exported or transported in violation of such an arms embargo resolution.

5. Stockpile management and security

Specific national legislation on stockpiling and arms storage governs stockpile locations of the Ministry of National Defense and their security. SALW and ammunition storage facilities are within or adjacent to military sites Locations for storage buildings are chosen according to operational and safety military plans

The commanders of military barracks or secure storage areas are responsible for ensuring the security of SALW and ammunition explosives The needed safety measures are identified and included in an area safety plan. Inspections are conducted periodically to verify the implementation of the plan

The overall responsible authority for the security of storage buildings is the Military Intelligence Service Inspections take place regularly on various operational levels

With regard to physical security measures, NATO standardization storage and security procedures are applied

A limited number of SALW stocks are in security storage facilities of the Ministry of Public Order. These SALW serve the law enforcement operational needs of the Hellenic Police

There are full records of all SALW stockpiles managed by the Armed Forces and the Police.

Any loss of the above weapons is immediately reported to the Military Intelligence Service and the Police. All lost/stolen small arms & light weapons are registered in the "National Information Schengen System".

6. Collection and disposal

Surplus stocks of SALW held by armed forces, police or other authorized bodies are disposed by using an effective method of their total de-activation and therefore they are considered to be destroyed.

The same method is being used for the disposal of confiscated/seized SALW designated for destruction.

The Hellenic Police is responsible for safeguarding all confiscated SALW which constitute evidence in the relevant judicial cases. Following a final court decision, the respective confiscated SALW are handed over to the Armed Forces. The military authorities determine either the use or the destruction of those weapons.

Greece submits annual information on SALW, identified as surplus and/or seized and destroyed, to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). For 2001, 339 SALW were reported as deemed surplus and destroyed and 518 as confiscated. The reported corresponding figures for 2002 were 231 and 672 SALW.

7. Export Controls

The Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible for issuing SALW export licences, following prior consultations with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense and, in certain cases (i.e. hunting rifles), the Ministry of Public Order. The licence is valid for three months and it can be extended for up to nine months.

The exporter submits his application along with the required documentation to the above mentioned Ministries. Exporters have to provide the Ministry of National Defense with an authenticated end-user cetificate.

The applications are assessed on a case by case basis and in conformity with the international obligations of Greece. In particular, the provisions of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (1998) are applied.

The granted licence is forwarded to the competent Customs authorities to proceed with the export.

A licence is also required for the transit and trans-shipment of SALW, issued by the Ministries of Public Order or Merchant Marine respectively and

after consultations with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, National Defense and Economy and Finance

The competent authorities have to ensure that all safety transport procedures and a predetermined route are followed

A transit/transshipment authorization may be denied for reasons of public safety, of national interest or due to sanctions imposed by the UN, the EU and OSCE

8. Brokering

Consultations are under way among the competent Ministries for amending the national legislation on arms exports in order to regulate arms brokerage according to the provisions of the recently adopted EU Council Common Position 2003/1168/CFSP/23.6.2003 on the Control of Arms Brokering

9. Marking, record keeping and tracing

The marking of small arms and light weapons, manufactured in Greece by the Hellenic Arms Industry S.A., includes : type of weapon, a unique serial number, the year of manufacture, and the country of manufacture

All entities involved in SALW transactions are required to keep records for a minimum of ten years

Competent Ministries are in the process of developing relevant electronic data bases.

10. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration/Awareness-raising

Greece does not face problems related to internal excessive accumulation and illicit trafficking in SALW and therefore no specific programs have been developed

On the other hand, Greek administrative and law enforcement agencies have established a strict border control regime, which has led to a considerable increase in the number of illicitly trafficked SALW being confiscated

Moreover, Greece actively participates in all efforts and initiatives to deal with the accumulation and illicit trafficking in SALW in the region of South Eastern European countries, as mentioned below.

REGIONAL LEVEL

Legally binding instruments

Greece has concluded bilateral Police Cooperation Agreements with its neighboring countries. These agreements include clauses on SALW and arms export control.

It has to be noted that the most elaborate agreement has been signed with Turkey and refers to "combating crime, especially terrorism, organized crime, illicit drug trafficking and illegal migration" (ratified by Law 2926/01).

Regional Cooperation

In the context of the above mentioned agreements, Greece provides neighboring countries with logistical and technical support, organizes seminars for police officers and regularly exchanges information on illicitly trafficked SALW.

As a NATO member, Greece participates as the lead nation in a project of a feasibility study for the destruction of 1.5 million SALW and 133,000 tons of munitions in the Ukraine. In 2002 Greece donated 50,000 Euro to that project.

In 2002 the Greek contribution to the NAMSA program for the destruction of SALW and munition stockpiles in Albania was 86,000 Euro. Greece is committed to a further annual contribution of 50,000 Euro up to the year 2006.

Greece has also donated 50 000 Euro to the SEEI Trust Fund for the destruction of SALW in Serbia and Montenegro.

In the fall of 2001 Greece participated in operation "Essential Harvest" for the collection and destruction of SALW in FYROM under the auspices of NATO.

In more general terms, Greece is a participant to the following regional efforts addressing, among others, issues on the illicit trafficking in SALW:

- Initiative for the Vlora Anti-Trafficking Center
- Adriatic and Ionian Initiative
- South Eastern European Cooperation Initiative

GLOBAL LEVEL

International instruments against terrorism and crime

Greece has signed and ratified the following Conventions and Protocols :

1. Convention on Offenses and Certain Other Offenses Committed on Board Aircraft - Tokyo 14 9 63
2. Convention for the Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft - The Hague 16 12 70
3. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Aircraft - Montreal 23 09 71
4. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Personnel - New York 14 12 73
5. Convention against the Taking of Hostages - New York 17 12 79
6. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material - 03 03 80
7. Protocol for the suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Aviation, complementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Aircraft - Montreal 24 02 88
8. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation - Rome 10 03 88
9. Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms on the Continental Shelf - Rome 10 03 88
10. Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection - Montreal 01 03 91
11. Convention for the Financing of Terrorism - 09 12 99

Furthermore Greece is a Party to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism.

It has also signed the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (New York, 15 12 97) and the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (and its 3 Protocols, including the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms) - Palermo, 15 12 2000.

International cooperation and exchange of information

Greece is in close cooperation both with EUROPOL and INTERPOL for the purpose of sending and receiving information about criminal activities related to small arms and light weapons.

Information on SALW transactions are also exchanged in the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement whose "Best Practice Guidelines for Exports of Small Arms and Light Weapons" (December 2002) is considered to be of utmost importance towards the harmonization of participating states' licensing and export control policies.

Athens, 8 July 2003